

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS.  
JANUARY 11, 1961

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 9:30 a.m. 1. CONVENE, ROOM 7000, INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING
2. SUBMISSIONS - INTERVIEWS
- 9:35 a.m. (a) General Services Administration, Public Bldgs. Svc.  
(Mr. L.L. Hunter, Asst. Comm'r. for Design and Construction; Mr. J. Rowland Snyder, Director, Arch'l. & Structural Div.; Mr. John E. Cudd, Liaison Architect, PES; Mr. Robert C. Dean, Mr. Andrew H. Hepburn, Perry, Shaw, Hepburn & Dean; Mr. Joseph Richardson, Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott; Mr. J. P. Carlhian; Mr. Sam R. Broadbent, Chief, Commerce & Finance Div., Bureau of the Budget)
- Court House - East Side of Lafayette Square
- 11:45 a.m. (b) Interior Department, National Park Service.  
National Capital Parks (Mr. William M. Haussmann, Chief, Architectural Branch, National Capital Parks)
- George Washington Memorial Parkway, Cabin John Bridge, Revised Design.
- 12:00 (c) District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency  
(Mr. John R. Searles, Jr., Executive Director, Mr. Gordon E. Howard, Deputy Executive Director, RLA; Mrs. Chloethiel W. Smith, Architect, of Satterlee & Smith)
- Southwest Waterfront Development
- 1:00 p.m. 3. Adjourn and proceed to Corcoran Gallery to view models of Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial Competition

Mr Orr  
Mr Walker  
Mr Rapuan

Monday 23 Jan 11

16 January 1961

Dear Mr. Floote:

At our meeting of January 10, 1961, the Commission of Fine Arts met with representatives of the General Services Administration, National Capital Planning Commission, and the architects to consider plans for the development of buildings on the east and west sides of Lafayette Square. The new buildings on the east side will house the Court of Claims and the Court of Customs and Patent Appeals, and the design will involve its relationship with the existing Treasury Annex building. The new building on the west side will house the Executive Offices of the President and will incorporate the existing Decatur House and Blair-Lee House into the development. The importance of the relationships of the two projects to Lafayette Square and to each other cannot be too greatly emphasized.

As directed by a letter from President Eisenhower of July 25, 1960, the greatest effort should be made to find a solution that "will revive the historical and architectural significance" of Lafayette Square and preserve the dignity and simplicity of the other older buildings on the Square, such as the White House, St. John's Church, Decatur House and Blair-Lee House.

The architects presented seven sketch plans showing various ways the buildings on both sides of the Square could be designed. After hearing explanations of these sketches, the members of the Commission restated their belief that only the ideal solution should be considered, and that the drawing entitled "Master Plan Scheme One" approached this ideal more than the others. They considered that further study will be required, and that the present program for the space requirement may have to be reviewed.

At the suggestion of Mr. L. L. Hunter, and in order to hasten the study, I have appointed a special committee, consisting of the following Commission members, Mr. Douglas Orr, Mr. Ralph Walker and Mr. Michael Rayuano, to meet jointly between regular meetings of the Commission with Mr. Hunter, the architects and a similar committee of three members of the National Capital Planning Commission to confer



upon the problems of the design. The two committees, Mr. Hunter, and the architects will accordingly meet on January 23, at 11:00 a.m. in the office of the Commission of Fine Arts and will then report their findings to their respective Commissions at the next meeting on February 15, 1960.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley  
Chairman

Honorable Franklin Floete  
Administrator  
General Services Administration  
Washington 25, D. C.





18 January 1961

Dear Mr. Wirth:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on January 11, 1961, conferred with Mr. William Hausmann, Chief of the Architectural Branch of the National Capital Parks, in regard to a revised design for a bridge over Cabin John Creek, as a part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Maryland.

Mr. Hausmann showed the members a drawing of the concrete-arch bridge, without the round supports on either end, as recommended by the Commission at a meeting on September 21, 1960. The members believed that the design was much improved and approved it as presented.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley  
Chairman

Honorable Conrad Wirth  
Director  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington 25, D. C.





18 January 1961

Dear Mr. Miller:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on January 11, 1961, conferred with the Director of the Redevelopment Land Agency, Mr. John Searles, and Mrs. Cloethial Smith, architect, in regard to Mrs. Smith's site plan and general redevelopment of the Maine Avenue Waterfront to be undertaken under the auspices of the Redevelopment Land Agency.

Using a scale model and a series of plans and elevation drawings, Mrs. Smith outlined the plan in general terms and then showed, in more detail, the features for her appropriate and imaginative project. In developing the plans, she made full recognition of the area as a main entrance to the Capital from the South, with due respect for its close relationship to the Capitol and East Potomac Park and important buildings and monuments that are visible from that part of the city.

The members approved the plan as presented and complimented Mrs. Smith for the high standard of design which it displayed. They thought the treatment was especially well conceived in achieving a close relationship between the Southwest Redevelopment Area and the waterfront. They noted with interest, the many aspects of the plan, such as the pedestrian promenade, the parking arrangements under the promenade, and the arrangement of seven plazas to separate the main buildings. They also stressed that, if the excellent promise shown by the plans is to be realized, some form of continuing supervision over the external architectural features of the commercial buildings along the waterfront must be provided after the Redevelopment Land Agency has released its control over the premises.

The Commission of Fine Arts will be glad to confer further with the Redevelopment Land Agency on the design of this area, if you so desire; and recommends that steps be taken to secure a workable method of architectural control of the waterfront area of the city under consideration.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley  
Chairman

Mr. Neville Miller  
Chairman  
District of Columbia Redevelopment  
Land Agency  
Washington 6, D. C.

EXHIBIT C



MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS  
FEBRUARY 14, 1961

The Commission met, in executive session, pursuant to notice at 2:00 p.m. with David E. Finley, Chairman, presiding.

Present were: David E. Finley  
Douglas W. Orr  
Ralph Walker  
Michael Rapuano  
Felix W. de Weldon

L. R. Wilson, Secretary  
C.H. Atherton, Asst. Secretary  
C.L. Martin, Counsel

William G. Perry absented himself from the meeting during the discussion of plans for Lafayette Square.

1. Administration

a. The members agreed that the next meeting of the Commission would be on March 15, 1961 at 9:30 a.m. with an executive session on March 14, 1961 at 2:00 p.m.

b. Approval of Minutes

The Secretary announced that the minutes of the January 1961 meeting had been approved by mail as drafted.

2. Submissions-Interviews

✓ a. Public Buildings Service, General Services Administration

Proposed Development of Public Buildings Fronting Madison and Jackson Place on Lafayette Square

The Commission met with representatives of the Public Buildings Service, General Services Administration, and the architects, to consider further the mass and siting of new buildings to be located on the east and west sides of Lafayette Square.

Mr. Roland Snyder of the Public Buildings Service, explained that since the last Commission of Fine Arts meeting, a conference had been held between representatives of the General Services Administration, the Bureau of the Budget and representatives of the President, at which it was concluded that the Treasury Annex building should not be razed and that the new Court of Claims and Court of Customs and Patent Appeals building should be designed to adjoin this building. The Commission





had not been informed of these meetings and did not participate in them. This meant that the ideal solution for the development of the site, which the Commission favored was not considered feasible. They expressed their regret that this was to be the case, but after discussing the matter accepted a plan proposed by the architects (Master Plan Scheme 1). This plan proposed a rectangular building north of the Treasury Annex of the same height as the Annex Building (but set back from Madison Place and H Street in order to afford sufficient area for landscaping between the building line and the public space. Such a scheme was thought to be consistent with the basic approaches followed on the north, in the example of St. John's Church, and planned for the west side of the square where landscaped space will separate the Decatur House and the Blair Lee House from the proposed new buildings.)

The members were also informed that on the northeast corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 17th Street, on Square 167, it had been determined that the present Court of Claims Building, formerly the Corcoran Art Gallery, should be preserved for use as a museum or for other purposes. The members were shown studies of a proposed Executive Office Building, which had been prepared as a consequence of this decision. The studies showed a square building in the center of Square 167 about 65 feet high, connected to a slab building extending from Pennsylvania Avenue along 17th Street from the rear of the present Court of Claims Building to H Street. The Commission was asked to give its recommendations on these studies. The Commission approved the plan in general and recommended that the building along 17th Street be restricted to a height of not more than 110 feet.

It was noted that a mass approximating that of the Decatur House was needed on the northwest corner of Jackson Place and Pennsylvania Avenue in order to give balance to the Jackson Place elevations. It was also noted that the present structures provided a natural joint with the Blair Mansion, and in addition, gave a sense of continuity to the old structures facing the State, War and Navy Building on Pennsylvania Avenue. Since there appeared to be certain advantages in both the scheme to retain the existing houses and the alternative to replace them with a new building of approximately the same size, the architects were requested to make a detailed study of each proposal in order to determine the most feasible scheme.

The Secretary was directed to prepare a letter to the Administrator, General Services Administration, setting forth the Commission's recommendations.

EXHIBIT A

(Mr. Perry joined the meeting)

b. Government of the District of Columbia





(1) Conference with General F. J. Clarke - Mutual Responsibilities of the District of Columbia and the Commission of Fine Arts

Engineer Commissioner Clarke and members of his staff conferred with the Commission upon several problems which have arisen in relation to the mutual responsibilities of the District Commissioners and the Commission of Fine Arts, imposed by the Shipstead-Luce Act, the Old Georgetown Act, and the building program of projects such as schools, libraries, roads, and urban renewal problems in the District of Columbia.

The members expressed the need for revising the Shipstead-Luce boundaries to incorporate certain important areas of the city not at present included within the area, so that the intent of the act could be carried out. The Commissioner replied that he was not aware of the fact that the boundaries could be revised without an act of Congress but that he would institute a study of the matter and advise the Commission further.

General Clarke expressed regret that the District Commissioners were unable to follow the Commission's recommendations regarding an application to raze a house in Georgetown (O.G. 2728, 1623 35th Street, N.W.), but they felt it was not an historic house. He stated that the Corporation Counsel interprets both the Old Georgetown Act and the Shipstead-Luce Act in a strict sense, limiting the application of the law to matters in which a conflict with a private owner's rights to property is not involved. The members replied that they believed that both acts are in the nature of zoning ordinances and that the Commission's policy has been to try and carry out the spirit of the acts which is to preserve the dignity and beauty of the city. It was suggested that perhaps the Old Georgetown Act should be made the subject of test case in court to determine its constitutionality. General Clarke replied that perhaps this should be done.

In regard to urban renewal, the members mentioned that the Commission would like to have a system established whereby proposed projects involving park lands and areas with important Federal buildings, such as the 10th Street Mall and the Maine Avenue waterfront, would be referred to the Commission for its comment and advice. This matter had been discussed in the Chairman's letter of November 3, 1960, addressed to the President of the Board of District Commissioners. General Clarke replied that he foresaw the possibilities of legal problems arising from the transfer of land from Redevelopment Land Agency control to private ownership before submission, but that he would be glad to participate in a study to see if this could be done. The Commission noted that the anticipated restrictions would be no greater on a private individual than that which exists now in the Shipstead-Luce Area.



c. Government of the District of Columbia, Department of Highways and Traffic

(1) Inner Loop Freeway Between K Street, N.W. and the Lincoln Memorial

✓ Mr. H. L. Aitken, Director of Highways for the District of Columbia, showed plans for the Inner Loop Freeway between K Street, N.W. and the Lincoln Memorial, which the Commission had not previously seen in its entirety.

The members expressed great concern about the effect upon the proposed National Cultural Center of the complex of roads east of the site, and in particular the effect of a three-level overpass adjoining the building which, according to the Department of Highways, is necessary. Mr. Aitken stated that the design of the overpass would be submitted to the Commission for review at a later date. The plans were shown to the Commission for informational purposes only, and consequently no action was necessary.

(2) E Street, N.W. Freeway, Between 21st Street and 23d Street, N.W.

✓ Plans for the connections of the western leg of the Inner Loop to E Street, N.W. were shown to the members. The plans showed an exit ramp leading from the depressed roadway of the Inner Loop to the pedestrian portal on the north facade of the State Department. It was noted that the result of this feature will be that previous plans for the development of the E Street Mall, which the Commission had approved, will apparently not be carried out. The members expressed the opinion that special care in designing the landscaping and the grade of the roadways will be required and asked that these plans be submitted to the Commission. After discussing the design at some length the Commission accepted it under the compelling circumstances created by the Inner Loop, which the Commission has never approved.

(3) Western Approaches to the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge.

✓ The members were shown a map of the road complex which will make up the western approaches to the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge. The map showed only the geometric pattern of the approach road system, omitting the grades and elevations of the various roadways. The members disliked the contemplated plan of two three-level overpasses in the parkland and strongly urged that some way should be found to avoid these features.





The members were pleased to note that the single track branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad near the George Washington Memorial Parkway will be eliminated and that the area will be reclaimed as parkland.

After discussing the matter, the Commission concluded that it could not give full consideration to the plans because of the lack of information in regard to the grade sections of the various roadways and structures. They requested that henceforth detailed plans be submitted to the Commission before the plans are developed to the point where changes cannot be made.

Following the discussions of these items on the agenda, the Secretary was requested to prepare a letter to Commissioner Clarke setting forth the Commission's recommendations. EXHIBIT B

d. Government of the District of Columbia, Department of Buildings and Grounds

✓ Design Standards for Schools and Libraries

The members conferred with Mr. James Blaser, Director of Buildings and Grounds for the District of Columbia, and Commissioner Clarke, concerning the design standards for schools and libraries in the District. Mr. Blaser appeared at the request of the Commission because of the continuing concern it has had about the many restrictions placed upon the design and site of schools, libraries and other District buildings. The members were specifically concerned with the proposals for a library and school which were considered at the October 19, 1960 meeting of the Commission. As a result of that meeting, at which the designs as presented were not approved, the Chairman wrote to General Clarke, suggesting that the entire program of design standards for schools and libraries should be re-evaluated. (See letter of November 3, 1960.)

The members stated that in regard to schools, the sites of the school and library shown to them at the October meeting were much too crowded and that the city ought to either provide more land for schools and library buildings or adopt other concepts of design. It was also pointed out that the architectural design of some of the buildings submitted to the Commission had little architectural merit.

General Clarke replied that he was not prepared to answer the Commission's general criticisms at that time. In regard to the amount of space required for the siting of libraries and schools, however, he pointed out that, in his opinion, the major problem was the securing of sufficient funds from Congress for the purchase of an adequate amount of land, and not any particular restrictions the District has originated.





In regard to the design standards for libraries, Mr. Blaser explained that the library personnel believe that certain typical requirements for circulation control and visibility dictate the design to a large extent. The members agreed that such functions have to be provided for, but they felt that the architects should be given greater freedom to demonstrate their ability to provide these functions within a good architectural design. It was also suggested that the architects appear before the Commission so that design problems would be discussed during the preliminary stages of design. EXHIBIT B 1

e. Department of the Army, Office of the Quartermaster General, Heraldic Branch

Distinguished Service Medal for United State Coast Guard

The members approved the design of a proposed Distinguished Service Medal for the United States Coast Guard as shown in the sketches submitted. It was suggested that the design of the reverse side would be improved if the seal of the Coast Guard was slightly enlarged and the space for the name of the recipient of the medal reduced in size. The Secretary was directed to prepare a letter setting forth the Commission's recommendations. EXHIBIT C

f. Century 21 Exposition Medal, Century 21 Exposition, Seattle, Washington

The Commission was shown sketches of the design for a souvenir medal which representatives of the Century 21 exposition had informally submitted for comment. After examining the sketches the members concluded that the designs should be simplified because of the many elements which would be difficult to execute in a coin-size medal. It was suggested that perhaps the reverse side should have only printed matter on it and no design, and that when the sculptor made plaster casts of the design he would be better able to judge how the proposed design can be simplified. The Secretary was directed to prepare a letter giving the Commission's recommendations. EXHIBIT D

3. Review

a. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Parks

✓ Location of Leif Ericson Statue

The Commission considered a request by the Acting Superintendent of the National Capital Parks for the views of the Commission on retaining a site, previously approved on February 22, 1946, for a statue of Leif Ericson by A. Sterling Calder, on a location in West Potomac Park near



the Inlet Bridge and facing the Potomac River.

The Chairman reminded the members that by act of Congress, all of West Potomac Park was reserved to the Franklin Roosevelt Memorial Commission, which is to select 27 acres as the memorial site. The Memorial Commission has not yet selected the 27 acres it desires to retain.

The Commission took no action, but resolved to await the possibility of viewing the site on the following day.

b. Proposed Executive Order

The members discussed a draft of a proposed Executive Order, previously considered at the January meeting, which would establish the jurisdiction of the Commission of Fine Arts to review federal projects and questions of art in the "National Capital Area," and which would provide that authorized officials who determine that a recommendation by the Commission will not be followed, must state in writing the reasons therefore to the President and the Commission. The members approved the proposed order as drafted and asked that it be forwarded to the President.

EXHIBIT D

c. Boy Scout Memorial and Design

The members looked at a plaster model of the proposed Boy Scout Memorial by Donald De Lue, and studied landscape designs of the Memorial by William Deacy, architect.

The Chairman stated that the principal problem before the Commission was the choice of a site for the memorial. He pointed out that National Park Service had approved a site on the Ellipse near 15th Street and north of Constitution Avenue, N.W., which the Commission had previously disapproved, at its meeting on June 14, 1960, and that the National Capital Planning Commission had also approved the Ellipse site and an alternate site on the Washington Monument Grounds. Letters were read to the members, which had been received from the Washington National Monument Society and the Society of Third Infantry Division objecting to placing the memorial on either of these sites.

EXHIBITS F-1 and F-2

After examining the model and the drawings, the members reaffirmed their opinion that the proposed design was far too large for the Ellipse site, and that another memorial on the Washington Monument Grounds would not be appropriate. It was suggested that a location on the Overlook at the southern termination of the proposed 10th Street Mall in southwest Washington would be an appropriate location, or at the end of Hain's Point.

The Commission took no action pending a conference with representatives





of the Boy Scouts and the sculptor and architect on the following day.

d. District of Columbia Government

(1) P.L. 231/71st Congress (Shipstead Luce Act)

Report, dated 2/14/61, of Actions Taken on Applications  
for Building Permits

The Assistant Secretary reported the actions taken, after recommendations of the Shipstead-Luce Panel of Architects, on the Shipstead-Luce applications forwarded for review by the District of Columbia Department of Licenses and Inspections since 10 January 1961. This report comprised Appendix 1 of the Order of Business. Confirmation of action was given in each instance to the recommendations of the Shipstead-Luce Panel. There were no unfavorable actions. EXHIBIT G

(2) P.L. 808/81st Congress (Old Georgetown Act)

Report, dated 2/14/61, of Actions Taken on Applications  
for Building Permits

The Assistant Secretary reported on the actions taken, after recommendations of the Old Georgetown Panel of Architects on the Old Georgetown Applications forwarded for review by the District of Columbia Department of Licenses and Inspections since 7 February 1961. This report comprised Appendix 2 of the Order of Business. After noting individual cases, the actions, as shown on Appendix 2, were confirmed by the members. There were no unfavorable actions or recommendations. EXHIBIT H

Respectfully submitted,

*C. L. Martin Jr.*

C. L. Martin, Jr.  
Counsel

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